I, in effect, was capturing the *nowahi* of the child: A photograph was called *nowahi*.[19] Tape recordings, in contrast, were not considered to be harmful. If anything, they enjoyed having me record their music and discussions, and always demanded that I play them back for everyone to hear. The word used to describe a recording was *no ahoahi*, the part of the soul that wanders in the jungle after the body is cremated. In short, only the *nowahi* aspect of the soul is vulnerable.

TREATMENT OF THE DEAD If a person dies in an epidemic, his body, along with those of the others who died, is placed on a tree platform and allowed to decay. After several months, an old man is appointed to strip the remaining decayed flesh from the bones and the bones are then cremated. The Yanomamö fear the smoke that is produced when a body is cremated, and since epidemics are feared, they do not like a chance on contaminating the houses, implements, and persons with the smoke produced by the burning bodies.

Under normal circumstances, the body of the deceased is placed on a pyre of logs, covered with additional wood, and allowed to burn until nothing but the large bones are left. The burning takes place in the village, usually in the afternoon. The children and women leave, as they are susceptible to contamination by the smoke. They all bathe carefully to wash off any possible contamination. Even the weapons are washed.

After the coals are cool enough to handle, the relatives sift the ashes meticulously with shallow, loosely woven baskets, collecting every bit of bone they can find. The charcoal of the wood is burned, lest a small piece of bone be mixed in with it. The accumulated bones are then ground in a log mortar, hollowed out by means of alternate burning and chopping. These logs are about 4 feet long and 6 to 8 inches in diameter. For grinding the bones of a male, white buzzard down is usually attached around the circumference of the mortar, and curved lines painted on the mortar with red pigment. The mortars used for females are not decorated as elaborately, but usually have decorative fibers of a palm tree, the kind used by women to decorate their perforated ears. Circles and dots are painted on the mortars of females.

The charred bones of the dead are placed, a few at a time, into the mortar and a long, slender pole is used as the pestle. These poles are about 6 feet long, 2 or 3 inches in diameter, and bear painted decorations. The bones are crushed into a black powder by a young man, while the relatives of the deceased sit around the mortar and weep profusely. The ground ashes are then transferred to hollow gourds through a small hole and sealed with wax and buzzard down. A little is left in the mortar and eaten, mixed with boiled plantain soup, on the day of the ceremony. The mortar is always burned after a ceremony.

About a year later, the rest of the ashes are eaten during a feast, again mixed with boiled plantain soup. Occasionally, they will deliberately save some of the ashes, especially ashes of those who were killed in raids, making use of them for a number of ceremonies. Before each attempt at getting revenge, the raiders eat the ashes of their slain kinsman. This puts them into the appropriate state of rage for the business of killing enemies.

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[19]Many informants gave a more pragmatic explanation of their fear of the camera. They did not want to be reminded of their dead kinsman, and if I had a photograph of the person, this would be an extremely offensive reminder to his relatives that their loved one was dead.